



Aruba's Ana di Cultura is in the spotlight as CATA 2008 gets officially underway

2008 was inaugurated as the official "Ana di Cultura" (Year of Culture) the Ministry of Culture, Labor and Sport, spotlighting both traditional and contemporary aspects of the arts and cultural history. During the official commencement of the Conferencia Anual de Turismo (CATA) De Aruba, an intensive three days of networking with major Latin and Central American tour operators and airlines, the Ana di Cultura was the central theme of the morning's presentation in the Westin Aruba Ballroom for over seventy delegates attending this year.

Master and Mistress of Ceremonies, Mario Arends and Natalie Maduro, were garbed in the historically typical dress of Aruba from Colonial times through the early 1920's, and a film aired of Aruba's Feria Patriotico.

Delegates were officially welcomed by Minister of Tourism and Transport Edison Brieson and Fritz Israel of the ATA welcomed the gathering on behalf of Aruba Tourism Authority, (ATA) Director Myrna Jansen. Miriam Dabian, ATA Director of Marketing for Latin America presented the gathering with the state of the tourism industry in Aruba at present as regards to Latin American, and the ATA plan for the future promotion.

Additionally welcoming the travel experts on behalf of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) and in the name of Rob Smith, President and CEO was Sanju Luidens-Daryanani, Marketing and Sales Director.

Updating the gathering on the improvements at Aruba's Reina Beatrix International Airport was Head of Airline Marketing for the Aruba Airport Authority (AAA) Margaret (Peggy) Croes. The morning opening ceremonies was dedicated to not only Aruba's past cultural life, but the state of the tourism industry today, and acquainting the group veteran delegates with the many changes that have taken place on the island in the past few years, due to a coordinated efforts by the public and private sector working together, and enormous investment (over \$350,000,000.) in the upgrading of amenities and facilities.

The morning opening of the CATA 2008 ended with guest speaker Dr. Luis Vicente León of Datanalisis, director of an independent polling and information analysis company out of Venezuela. The examination of political/economic forces in Latin and Central America and how they directly impact the amount of "disposable income" that citizens of the region have to spend on tourism, is a subject of great interest to all those attending the conference. Afterwards, the CATA delegates, accompanied by ATA and AHATA representatives spent a busy afternoon inspecting a number of Aruban resorts, ending the day with a cultural evening at the Paseo Herencia Mall in Palm Beach. and ended the day with a bit of the old and the new at the Paseo Herencia Mall in Palm Beach.